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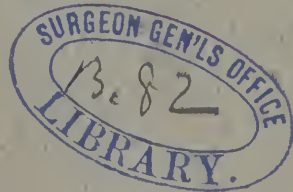
SUGGESTIONS

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Organization of the Proposed Female College

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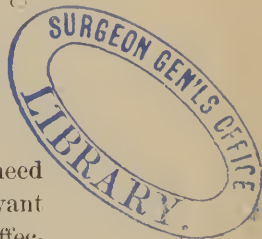
Organization of the Proposed Female College

AT

BRYN MAWR, PA.

If asked what kind of a college women are most in need of, from a student's stand-point I should say that they want more institutions where the work they do will be effectual, where they can systematically labor under excellent instructors and where the results of their study will give them a recognized, definite position from which to start in life. While women of ability have always found certain opportunities for mental culture, yet they have too often been put in a false position; with solid attainments, they have not been able to gain a market value for them because their work has not had the stamp of a good institution upon it. A good female college can therefore accomplish a double purpose. It can offer as of first importance, a place where women will be able to train their minds so well that, after leaving college, they will continue their education under different conditions of life, and it can also, by presenting a high standard which all will recognize, enable its graduates to command the positions for which they are qualified by their attainments.

In this view of the subject it seems a pity to duplicate in any way the preliminary work of the ordinary schools by having a preparatory department immediately connected with the college. The only arguments in favor of it are, that otherwise a sufficient number of pupils cannot be obtained, or that an institution cannot afford to act without regard to income from scholars. The former has been disproved by the experience of Smith College, and the latter is happily not the case here. From the interest which is taken in the proposed college, it is highly probable that pupils are even now studying with the view of entering at the start, and it is certain



that a small, fully qualified class can be formed the first year. When it is proved by the admission of such a class that the standard is high, good students will be attracted the next year who might not otherwise have thought of coming, and meanwhile schools will be fitting candidates. So far from a small number for the first year being a disadvantage, it will rather be an assistance in preventing the confusion which must inevitably prevail in classifying a number of ill-prepared students. Moreover by opening with one class, the difficulty of immediately supplying a full faculty is averted, and the college can develop slowly and naturally. But if schools discover that the college is willing to expend part of its strength in supplying their deficiencies, they will continue to let it do their work; on the other hand the stimulus of preparing pupils will help the schools. In fact one reason why girls' schools have generally been so poor is that the inducement of fitting students for college has been lacking.

To give this stimulus definite form, scholarships might be distributed among the different Friends schools and colleges to be obtained by competitive examinations, at for instance Providence, R. I., West Town, Penn., New Garden, N. C., Wilmington Col., Ohio, Earlham Col., Ind., Penn Col., Iowa.

If the scholarships are distributed, and the entrance examinations decided upon a year before the college opens, it will ensure a certain number of prepared students at the opening.

REQUISITES FOR ADMISSION.

Starting then without the incubus of a preliminary department, the Haverford requisites for admission* might be taken with one or two modifications, as follows: Algebra *through* quadratic equations; German grammar and reader; French grammar and easy French reading.

It may seem unusual to require French and German, as well as Latin and Greek, but it is suggested, in the belief that

*See Haverford Reports, Haverford College P. O., Montgomery County, Pa. This college is situated one mile from Bryn Mawr, and since 1833 has exerted a leading educational influence in the Society of Friends.

the modern languages cannot be an equivalent for the ancient, and also that both are necessary at the beginning of a college course. It is much easier to acquire modern languages when the pupil is young, and all girls' schools offer facilities for their study. At any rate such preliminary work should not be done at college, and yet these languages are indispensable for literary, scientific or classical studies.

For the first year, I would suggest a prescribed course somewhat similar to that of the Freshman class at Haverford, with the addition of French and German. During this year the student will gain enough Latin and Greek to begin to appreciate their literature, to understand scientific nomenclature if she intends to devote herself to science, or under any circumstances, to better understand the niceties of her own language. She also gains sufficient general knowledge to enable her to discover what her peculiar mental needs are. The next year I should think the general student would be ready for a largely elective course, elective under certain conditions only, so that she would be forced to get a broad general education, but that where two or three studies were of equal importance she could choose between them. Side by side with the general course which the general student would have to take, might run more special lines of study. Those who intend to teach Greek for instance, or who will be physicians, might pursue a narrower course adapted to their wants, and their diplomas would stand for as much knowledge and training as the general student will have. These special courses should be marked out. To this extent the college can assist special characteristics, without giving undue prominence to them.

I cannot see how the college course can be adapted to meet the present wants of women, unless it thus provides for both general students and special ones to a certain extent. For while it is highly desirable that all who have the means should first obtain general culture, yet, at present, it is the women whom necessity is sending into a profession, who chiefly go to college. They are forced to get the training, while women of leisure do not feel the same spur.

While this is true, there is on the other hand a large class of women of no profession, who ultimately marry, and whose influence spreads itself in a thousand ways none the less important because diffused. This class will always be large and its members are generally in circumstances in which they can avail themselves of educational advantages. It is certainly of great importance that they should have a college training, which will enable them to bring up their children well and exercise a cultivated social influence.

I should think that the organization of technical schools would detract from the strength of the general course, since one department is almost necessarily encouraged at the expense of the other; and as technical schools are generally smaller and for non-resident scholars, it will be easy for women to gain admission into those which already exist.

SUBJECTS TO BE TAUGHT.

No attempt has been made in the following remarks to speak of all the studies to be taught. I have only mentioned those which seem to demand special attention, knowing that a full curriculum will be discussed by persons of experience.

• First I should be glad to enter a protest against classing Greek merely in the list of other languages. The modern languages cannot be an equivalent for the high literary standard which the study of Greek and Latin insensibly gives the student. It is the greatest assistance to one's powers of criticism to have a fair knowledge of the most perfect language and literature known, because it offers a criterion of excellence for the judgment. The scientific student will of course be unable to continue its study, but it might be made a requirement to all for entrance through the first year.

If, as I suppose is the case here, one aim of the college is especially to give women what they find hard or impossible to obtain elsewhere, it can supply no greater need than that of good scientific training. For many special studies private tutors can often be found, but chemistry and physics cannot be learnt without the expensive apparatus and mate-

rial only to be found in colleges. These studies, and biology in all its branches lead to many practical results. Through their study women can fit themselves for teaching and supply an entirely unsatisfied demand for scientific teachers. They can also help to support themselves by scientific drawing, and the preparation of microscopic specimens, for which they are said to be particularly adapted by their fineness of touch. It will also enable the general student to read understandingly scientific literature.

Mathematics needful for the above studies, and also for those students who wish to pursue it for itself will be indispensable, but in general I should think it not worth while to force a student through an extended mathematical course, while there are so many studies which lead to more productive results.

During the four years a student should get such an acquaintance with general literature, that she should have a cultivated taste for it, which will be a benefit and pleasure to her all through life.

Great attention may well be given to the training of students to express themselves clearly in writing, since it will help them in almost every undertaking.

With some difficulties, a young college has great advantages in starting unencumbered, and in being able to meet the latest demands which modern conditions of society and science have developed. Take for instance the Political Sciences. No studies can have a more important influence than these upon the student as a member of the community, and it seems peculiarly suitable for a female college to have excellent advantages in this department, since women get their knowledge of events largely from books. It is also necessary for them to understand the significance of the political questions of the day, especially those women who become writers, and who wish to influence their own generation through magazines and other current literature. Wages, population, pauperism, should be thoroughly considered in view of the fact that women are largely associated with public charities and various philanthropic callings.

If they had better training for this kind of work it would prevent much injudicious effort and alms-giving.

In regard to history, the vicinity of Bryn Mawr to Philadelphia, will give an opportunity for its study, not by text books merely, but also by constant reference to the original authorities as far as is possible. For this purpose the continual use of the public library in Philadelphia will be necessary, and the professor of history must be thoroughly acquainted with its resources. For instance at Harvard, when pupils are working at a certain period in history, lists of the pamphlets, articles or contemporary literature of that time are given them to look up, and thus in their small way they work as the great historians do. The knowledge they gain becomes peculiarly their own, and is superior to an acquaintance with text books, just as actual work in a laboratory is superior to listening to lectures.

I think the time will come when art will be taught as a theory to all, and to almost all as a practice. Whoever can learn to write can learn to draw a recognizable object, and this power is of use continually. These elements should be taught at school, so that when a student comes to college, she should be able to draw fairly well and to sketch. It should be possible for every lover of nature to record satisfactorily his impressions of scenery. For this, the pleasant country around Bryn Mawr, and the fine views from the college site offer abundant opportunities. In addition to the practical side of art, a college should teach students how to distinguish between good and bad coloring, between false and true proportion, to understand the harmony and relation of color, in short how to see and to discriminate. Every one who has a college education feels qualified in a greater or less degree to criticise literary productions and pass a judgment more or less correct upon them. But matters of color and form which literally meet our eyes at every glance are referred to a certain class of men who make this their business; I see no more reason why this should be so than that literature and its criticism should be confined to one class merely. Lectures on color, harmony and propor-

tion would help to supply this need, and casts of the antiques, engravings and lithographs of the best paintings of all times, systematically and clearly arranged as in the excellent collection at Smith College, would insensibly cultivate the student's eye just as maps hung on walls gradually give scholars a correct idea of the countries, even when special attention is not drawn to them.

TRAINING FOR SPECIAL CALLINGS.

Under an elective system, the student will have the power to adapt her studies, so that while receiving a general education, she can shape her course with reference to any one of the following professions which she may ultimately choose.

By providing the college with excellent chemical and biological laboratories, women who intend to become physicians or nurses can prepare themselves by a scientific and preliminary medical training somewhat similar to that proposed by the Johns Hopkins University. Special attention to such a course will involve no additional outlay, for the laboratories will be required, under any circumstances, for general use. The medical school for women in Philadelphia, and the proposed training school for nurses of the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, would give added stimulus to this department.

There is another adaptation of the general course which it would seem very appropriate for women of the Society of Friends to have the opportunity to avail themselves of, since this Society alone recognizes women's ministry. I mean in no degree a theological chair, for as such it would antagonize the principles of the ministry of Friends. But lectures on Jewish history, the religions of other nations, a good understanding of modern drifts of ethical thought, would be a great assistance to many serious and inquiring students, and would enable them, if called to the ministry in later life, to give it all the power of a well trained mind, as well as higher spiritual gifts.

The art of designing is becoming largely engrossed by women, and is said to be very lucrative. Architecture is

also attracting them for a profession; engraving is another pursuit well adapted for them. Without directly encouraging these branches, special attention to the course on art above referred to would stimulate and help those students who intend ultimately to choose them. There is an excellent school of design in Philadelphia with which connection might be made.

That a corresponding demand for training to teach exists does not seem equally plain. There are good normal schools existing in the different states, and therefore why burden the college with a course which requires such special conditions which can be well obtained elsewhere, while there are so many unsupplied demands to fill? The college can better help those who intend to teach by making its diplomas such guarantees of scholarship that they will obtain good positions, and by giving them facilities for a thorough knowledge of whatever branches they will in the future teach, than it can by giving them the drill which training to teach implies. If the college will aim at supplying the want for women professors and teachers of a high grade, it can best promote the interests of that profession.

PHYSICAL CULTURE.

Much will depend upon the manner with which physical exercise is started in the college. When a boy goes to an already organized college, he finds in existence every convenience for sports, and it is easy for him to get in the habit of exercising. But a new college, and especially one for girls, as they are not usually brought up to out-door amusements, must begin with special attention paid to this part of a student's course, or else the girls will settle down to a sedentary life, such as they too often lead at home. I am sure, that as a general thing, they will not make much exertion to obtain exercise, unless it is made easy for them. A large, well heated and ventilated gymnasium is the main requisite, since it can be used in all weathers. It should contain appliances for lighter gymnastics and calisthenics. This latter might be compulsory in winter, otherwise the girls

will not take the trouble to spend an hour a day in such exercise. In the spring and fall they will naturally prefer out-door amusements. This gymnasium will also be a place where, in the evenings when they have no studying to do, they can collect and play and amuse themselves.

This hall might be situated in the basement of the academic building, with an asphalt floor on which the girls can skate. For out-door sport, a skating pond kept in as good order as possible, will greatly add to the student's health and pleasure. In warm weather a swimming pool in a pavilion will not only be good exercise, but it will teach the girls what every one should learn, how to save themselves from drowning.

A lawn tennis court will certainly attract girls into the open air, and in winter this game could easily be set up in the gymnasium.

All this may seem unnecessary expense and trouble for mere physical exercise, but it is worth while to make this department attractive. Students then enter into it with so much more zest, that it helps the health and spirits accordingly. While so much good is done by hearty, spontaneous, enjoyable exercise, the same does not hold good for forced household labor. That it will give useful knowledge for the future is no argument in its favor, since any fairly intelligent girl will say truly that she does not need to learn such work by repetition. By observation, I have found that required manual labor is never well done; the girls invariably hurry over or neglect it. But where a student wants to work her way, special arrangements could easily be made.

The same remarks apply to cooking. The students are not at college for such purposes. It is a good thing to know how to cook, as it is to know many other things which have no place in an institution whose aim is to develop and train the minds of young women, so that they will act best in the positions they will have to fill in after life. It needs a student's whole time and strength to so prepare herself; and she cannot afford to waste either in minor details which are easily acquired afterward if necessary.

REGULATIONS AND DISCIPLINE.

The health and contentment of the students will depend largely upon having the cooking the best of its kind. Nothing produces general dissatisfaction and discomfort sooner than bad cooking, and on no point do colleges and boarding schools seem more inclined to practice a false economy. Students will be satisfied with simple nutritious food, but they can immediately detect any disposition to save money at their expense. For this reason I would suggest that it should be made impossible for the matron or steward to be pecuniarily interested in the supplies for housekeeping. Let their salaries be entirely independent, for if not, it will be a great temptation for them to provide inferior or badly cooked food. In this connection it may not be out of place to say a few words in regard to early breakfasts.

In most colleges where the students are boarded, it is considered that some peculiar virtue exists in very early rising. If scholars are forced to rise very early, they must go to bed at a correspondingly early hour, although it is far more natural to make the retiring hour a little later and allow for a later breakfast, at for instance eight o'clock. By a seven o'clock breakfast in winter, there is more energy lost than there is time gained.

It is difficult to overrate the importance of having meals well served. I doubt if food is eaten in sufficient quantities or properly digested when table linen is not neat, waiters few and badly trained, and food put on the table in an unattractive manner.

It may be unnecessary to enter a plea for as few rules and regulations, as few bells as possible. The machinery of boarding school life is apt to weary scholars, and it is a great relief to lessen this as far as practicable. Electric clocks in every class room will keep the students informed of recitation hours. No compulsory hours of study are needed. The students will be old enough to make the requirements of the professors for good recitations all that is necessary to ensure faithful work, and, if left to themselves, they can best arrange

their hours to suit their own convenience. The wearing sensation of having every moment marked off is then taken away.

In her social life, to take it for granted that a pupil is going to act rightly, is the surest way to make her do so.

Therefore I should say that no restrictions are needed until the definite occasions arise which show their necessity. For most girls to throw them in general upon their own self-respect is the continuance of their home treatment, and under this regime, their home-feeling and love for the college are as much fostered, as their character and dignity are developed.

THE REQUISITE BUILDINGS.

What every student most desires is a room where she can shut out the demands of her surroundings and isolate herself for study. That this can be best supplied by the cottage system seems evident. It is no rest for a student to have a room upon either side of which she knows there is another just like it, and which is situated in a long hall, where on the tap of the bell thirty girls will issue from similar doors. But if instead of a large dormitory, the students are lodged in four or five cottages of twenty-five inmates each, the whole nervous strain attendant upon living in a crowd is removed.

These cottages can be planned so that each student will have a room to herself, or two can sleep in one room and have the other for study. Pleasant parlors down stairs will in general be all that is necessary for social purposes. It will add to the general effect of the college, if each of these cottages is different in plan and of irregular shape. As there is plenty of space they need only be two stories high and thus contribute much to the comfort of the inmates. One or more teachers should lodge in each cottage.

I would suggest a separate building, in which all the economic departments of the college should be concentrated; in the cellar, the heating apparatus for this and the academic building; on the first floor, the dining hall, china and grocery

closets and kitchen; and on the second floor, over the dining room, the sitting and lodging rooms for servants, and over the kitchen, the laundry.

It will be possible to make the dining hall very pleasant since it can be open on three sides, and of whatever shape is most appropriate. If it is irregular in form, it can be broken up into many small tables, and thus the unpleasant feeling of eating in a crowd will be avoided.

The only objection to this plan is, that it forces students to go out in the open air three times a day. So far from this being in reality a difficulty, it is an advantage, if one point is insisted upon,—that the students must wear suitable outdoor wraps. It may seem a trivial point, but I am convinced that upon this greatly depends the success of the separate building system. The asphalt paths can always be kept clear of snow, and in rainy weather the distance is not far enough to get wet, but if the girls become careless about hats and coats, colds will be the consequence, and complaints of exposure which, if rightly taken, would benefit the health.

The academic building will be of course the main feature of the group of buildings. It will contain the collection hall, gymnasium, art rooms and class rooms. To make these last as attractive as possible by prints, maps and appropriate illustrations will help the students greatly in their study. The laboratories must, of course, be separate to avoid unpleasant odors. By being apart they have the advantage of light on all sides, and thus allow for more stands for pupils. For convenience, they might be near the main building, and connected to it by corridors.

A greenhouse will be indispensable, both for botanical purposes and to keep plants during the winter which will be used for setting out the grounds in summer. As this involves useful but unattractive houses for cuttings, etc., the greenhouse proper might be put where it will be somewhat out of view, and a conservatory might be built opening into the dining room.

E. T. KING.

Baltimore, 1st Month 20th, 1879.

